

2005

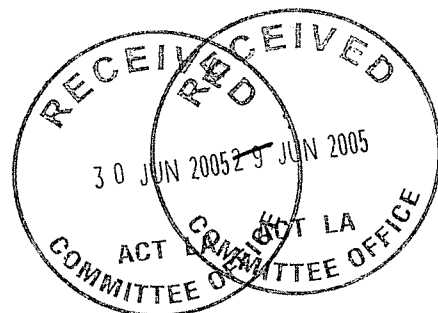
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL
TERRITORY

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
REPORT NO 5 - *TEACHING IN THE ACT: SHAPING THE FUTURE*

TABLING STATEMENT

Presented by Ms Katy Gallagher MLA

Minister for Education and Training



Mr Speaker, I am pleased to table the Government response to the Standing Committee on Education Report on *Teaching in the ACT: Shaping the Future*.

The report was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on 26 August 2004. I would like to thank the Committee for the time and contribution it has invested in compiling this comprehensive report.

The Government is committed to providing quality education for ACT school students. This is reflected in the recent investment of \$48 million in new policy initiatives that impact on areas noted in the Committee's recommendations. A number of the recommendations are also addressed in key elements of the *Teaching Staff Certified Agreement 2004-2006* including support for beginning teachers, professional development in disability and special education, and valuing the professionalism of teachers through increases in pay and the provision of flexible working conditions.

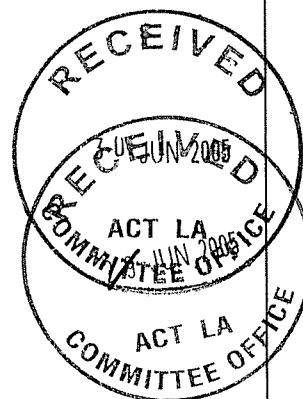
The Committee's recommendations included the establishment of a teacher registration board for the ACT as a matter of priority. The Government acknowledges that the ACT is the only jurisdiction that does not have a teacher registration process and that a number of different models are in place in other states and territories. The Government will examine these models and explore issues specific to the ACT associated with teacher registration, and report back to the Assembly later this year. This will also include monitoring developments on the national agenda including the role of the National Institute of Quality Teaching and School Leadership in respect to the professional aspects of teaching.

The Government recognises the strengths of close collaboration between the University of Canberra and the Australian Catholic University Signadou in the areas of pre-service training and field experience and already has strong links with the University of Canberra through a variety of forums, including the Joint University of Canberra Liaison Committee. This collaboration will be further strengthened to take account of issues raised by the Committee and through seeking to establish a Joint Liaison Committee with the Australian Catholic University. Additionally it will invite the Australian Catholic University to have a representative on the department's Qualifications Committee.

I commend the Government response to the Assembly.

**THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY**

**GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION
REPORT NO 5
*TEACHING IN THE ACT – SHAPING THE FUTURE***



30 June 05

INTRODUCTION

On 16 December 2003, the Standing Committee on Education resolved to undertake an inquiry in response to current national and international debate including issues about teacher recruitment, the retention of new and experienced teaching staff, and the current retirement and separation from the profession that face State and Territory Governments.

The inquiry was conducted under the Standing Committee's responsibility to examine matters related to early childhood education and care, primary, secondary, post secondary and tertiary education, non-government education, arts and culture, sport and recreation.

The Committee's report was tabled in the ACT Legislative Assembly on 26 August 2004.

The Standing Committee on Education report included sixteen recommendations.

GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

The Committee recommends that the Government work with the University of Canberra and the Australian Catholic University Signadou to develop data on graduate teacher satisfaction and participation in the teaching profession on completion of their studies over the longer term. The Committee further recommends that this data should capture issues relating to: managing student behaviour; collegial relationships; parent/teacher relationships; and lesson plans.

Agreed-in-Principle

Currently the Government provides feedback to the Australian Catholic University - Signadou and the University of Canberra through Department of Education and Training representation on university committees and annual reports on graduate performance from the teacher recruitment process. Valuable feedback is also provided through informal means such as collegial relationships established between department and university employees. Feedback provided through these sources has seen changes to university course content and structure to better meet graduate needs on entering the teaching profession.

The Government agrees to work with local universities to expand data collection to establish the extent to which specific issues relating to managing student behaviour, collegial relationships, parent/teacher relationships and lesson planning impact on graduate teacher satisfaction and participation in the teaching profession. This will be achieved by gathering data from beginning teachers within the evaluation component of the Beginning Teacher Support Program and expanding data collection for the employee exit survey to capture information on specific issues raised.

Recommendation 2

The Committee recommends that the Government develop formal mechanisms to strengthen collaboration between the University of Canberra and the Australian Catholic University Signadou and schools, particularly in the area of pre-service training and field experience

Agreed-in-Principle

There are several formal mechanisms currently in place that enable collaboration between the department and the University of Canberra. These include:

- university representation on the department's Qualifications Committee
- department representation on the University of Canberra Field Experience Committee
- the Joint Liaison Committee, between ACT Department of Education and Training /University of Canberra.

The Joint Liaison Committee, ACT Department of Education and Training /University of Canberra has proven to be a particularly effective model, providing advice that led to the expansion of the Internship Program at the University of Canberra from the Primary Bachelor of Education Program into the Secondary Bachelor of Education Program.

The Government will examine the feasibility of establishing a Joint Liaison Committee with the Australian Catholic University – Signadou, similar to that of the University of Canberra model. The Australian Catholic University will also be invited to have a representative on the department's Qualifications Committee.

Recommendation 3

The Committee recommends that the Government provide for increased numbers of appropriately skilled teachers and principals to be placed in education faculties as teacher educators for specified durations.

Noted

Many skilled government school teachers are very active in teacher education programs. Their roles include:

- participation in teacher education programs in the role of guest or casual lecturer/tutor in a number of lecture series and tutorials
- providing input into the teacher education process through professional associations
- employment within the Schools and Community Program located at the University of Canberra to deliver literacy programs
- the provision of field experience placements in partnership with the university.

Recommendation 4

The Committee recommends that the Canberra Institute of Technology consider the need for mechanisms that analyse recruitment issues, course demand and student enrolment levels from an institution wide perspective, to ensure appropriate workforce management strategies are developed and implemented.

Agreed

The Canberra Institute of Technology (CIT) has, in the past year, established processes for strengthening its central coordination of recruitment and succession planning. Major recruitment campaigns, such as one conducted in the second half of 2004 will be centrally managed. In addition, a number of strategies have been implemented to improve CIT's attractiveness to potential employees - these included improved professional development, more flexible leave arrangements and salary packaging.

Recommendation 5

The Committee recommends that the Government work with the University of Canberra and the Australian Catholic University Signadou, to develop courses targeted at retraining teaching staff currently employed in the system in areas of Languages other than English, Information and Communication Technology, Science and Special Education.

Noted

The Government has implemented a number of retraining courses in identified areas of need to meet teacher shortage. In the past the Department of Education and Training has worked collaboratively with both the Australian Catholic University and the University of Canberra to deliver retraining courses in areas of need. An example of a recent initiative is the Maths Retraining Program at the University of Canberra. This course, which incurred significant delivery costs, was successful in supplying teachers for this area of shortage.

The department also uses targeted recruitment, as a cost effective alternative arrangement for attracting teachers in shortage areas to employment with the ACT. Within this arrangement identified areas of need are highlighted in press advertisements and highly ranked applicants are given priority for permanent appointment.

Further the Government has provided \$250,000 per annum in recurrent funding through the latest Teaching Staff Certified Agreement to the Teacher Scholarship Program. This program will support teachers to undertake further study and retraining, particularly in areas of need.

Recommendation 6

The Committee recommends that the Government consider offering scholarships to undergraduate students in areas of specialised subject shortage.

Noted

Evidence from other models has shown is limited evidence of a clear link between the provision of scholarships to undergraduate students and successful outcomes in meeting teacher shortage in areas of identified need.

Recommendation 7

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training and the Catholic Education Office investigate undergraduate science and maths teaching students being engaged to assist school students and teachers in secondary schools.

Noted

The department will advise the Catholic Education Office of this recommendation. It is the department's policy that unqualified or trainee student teachers do not work in schools without the supervision of qualified teachers. The Government currently provides opportunities for University of Canberra students who have successfully completed the final year internship program to be employed as casual interns in ACT schools provided they are supervised.

Recommendation 8

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training extend and market the accessibility of teacher resources and professional development services available at the Teaching and Learning Technology Centre to all education sectors.

Agreed

The department markets its professional learning activities available at the Centre for Teaching and Learning (CTL) on ACTivatED, (<http://activated.decs.act.gov.au>) the online resource for teachers in the ACT. This portal is accessible to the public and available to all education sectors, including teachers in non-government schools.

Teachers from the Catholic and the independent schools sectors have accessed a number of the professional development activities at the Centre for Teaching and Learning, including the Embedding Learning Technologies workshops and the 2004 Committee to Learning Technologies conference. The department will continue to extend the professional development services available at the CTL to all education sectors. Meetings are held once each term between the department and the Catholic Education Office to discuss sharing resources and professional development activities.

The CTL library is unique to the ACT and contains an extensive variety of educational resources for curriculum enrichment. Teachers from ACT government schools, independent schools, Catholic schools, academics, home educators and student teachers have access to the CTL library.

Recommendation 9

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training investigate superannuation arrangements that will enable teachers and principals who wish to remain longer in the profession or to work part time to do so without financial detriment.

Noted

The Australian Government has legislative responsibility for superannuation arrangements for Commonwealth and ACT public servants, including teachers.

The department actively promotes flexible working arrangements to encourage teaching staff to work in schools after retirement.

The department encourages retired teachers and principals to return to temporary casual or contract employment following their retirement and between 2002-2004, out of 241 teachers that retired almost half returned to employment with the department.

The department is also developing a work life balance toolkit which promotes a number of flexible working arrangements available for mature aged workers nearing retirement age, including options for part-time work, job share and work from home arrangements.

Recommendation 10

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training and the Catholic Education Office, in consultation with schools, compile comprehensive data relating to teachers, teacher workforce trends and reasons for separation from the profession on a regular basis.

Agreed-in-Principle

The Government recognises the importance of collecting comprehensive data relating to teacher separation and workforce trends. The department has just started to expand data collection in this area, with the introduction of an employee exit survey that is conducted on staff separation from the Department of Education and Training. This survey collects demographic information on the employee's service and employment history, personal information and reasons for separation.

The department will draw this recommendation to the attention of the Catholic Education Office.

Recommendation 11

The Committee recommends that the Government work with the University of Canberra and Australian Catholic University Signadou to make the impact of different kinds of disabilities a key focus in the educational theory and practice components of teaching courses.

Agreed-in-Principle

The Government will continue to work in collaboration with the universities to ensure that catering for different kinds of disabilities are a key component of teaching courses. Issues relating to the impact of different kinds of disabilities on teaching courses will be raised during Joint Liaison Committee meetings.

Recommendation 12

The Committee recommends that the Government provide teachers and support staff who currently teach students with disabilities appropriate training in the specialist skills needed to work with such students through the development of a professional development module.

The Committee recommends that the Government invest further in the recruitment of qualified teacher aids for deployment, as needed, into those schools with special needs.

Agreed

The Government acknowledges that as enrolments of students with complex needs have increased, the need for qualified staff has risen. The Government is committed to providing quality education for students with disabilities by providing funding to meet increased need. Through this funding an additional three autism units opened in ACT government schools in 2005.

There are currently 14 special teacher assistants sponsored by the department undertaking Certificate (III) and (IV) Disability Work. These special teacher assistants will complete this course of study by mid 2005. The department will continue to offer this program in 2005, with an expected minimum enrolment of 12 and extend this to offer over 24 additional sponsored places in disability study to teachers and special teacher assistants for 2005. In addition, the department will provide further training for teachers in specialist skills for specific disabilities, sponsoring seven teachers to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Autism Studies at the University of Canberra and five teachers to undertake the Graduate Certificate in Sensory Impairment at the University of Newcastle in 2005.

Teachers will be encouraged to apply for funding through the Government's Teacher Scholarship Program to undertake a course of study related to working with students with disabilities.

Recommendation 13

The Committee recommends that that the Government raise the profile of the teaching profession in the ACT through a positive media campaign in conjunction with key stakeholders.

Agreed-in-Principle

The Government recognises the relationship between positive media and the status of the teaching profession within the community. Promotional and recruitment campaigns engage with universities, career fairs and the union to lift the profile of teaching. Teachers and their school communities are supported in promoting their achievements through the mainstream media and specialist press. An example of this was the Government's promotion of teaching as a profession through its support of World Teachers' Day.

Recommendation 14

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training review the current induction and mentoring program for teachers, with a view to extending the program from two to five years.

Noted

The Government's commitment to providing comprehensive professional support for teachers is outlined in the *ACT Department of Education and Training Teaching Staff Certified Agreement 2004-2006* through additional support for beginning teachers and professional mentoring for classroom teachers to support teaching and leadership excellence.

From 2005, the Government will provide an additional \$1m per annum in recurrent funding to support beginning teachers in their first three years. The Beginning Teacher Support Program provides schools with an additional 15 days to release beginning teachers and others (e.g.

mentors) as appropriate, from classroom duties as a part of an individually defined development program that may include observations, mentoring and additional professional development.

As part of the Government commitment to developing classroom teachers, all teachers receive mentoring as a part of the Teachers' Professional Pathways Program.

Recommendation 15

The Committee recommends that the Government establish a teacher registration board as a matter of priority and make registration a compulsory requirement for all teachers in the ACT as soon as practicable.

Noted

The Government will explore possible options for ACT teacher registration during 2005 and monitor developments on the national agenda including the role of the newly established National Institute of Quality Teaching and School Leadership.

In developing a policy position on the feasibility of teacher registration for the ACT consideration needs to be given to the different models from other states, the costs of introducing such a scheme, as well as registration requirements in other professions. The department will consult with key stakeholders including the non-government sector and teacher unions, in examining registration issues related specifically to the ACT before proceeding on compulsory teacher registration.

Recommendation 16

The Committee recommends that the Department of Education and Training monitor the work of the New South Wales Teachers Institute with regards to professional support and ongoing professional development of the teaching profession.

Agreed

The department will monitor work undertaken on both the national and state level, including the work of the New South Wales Teachers Institute, with regards to professional support and ongoing professional development of the teaching profession.